[27th February 1934

Local Self-Government

Voting at local boards elections by photo or colour.

* 712 *Q.*—Mr. M. B. Rangaswami Reddi: Will the Hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(*a*) in how many local boards and municipalities the system of voting by photo or colour was followed during the last election;

(*b*) whether the Government have received reports to the effect that the system proved to be a success; and

(*c*) whether the Government will consider the desirability of extending the system throughout the Presidency?

A.—(*a*) The system was adopted in the case of 99 panchayats which were formerly unions.

(*b*) The Government received a report from the Inspector of Municipal Councils which showed that the system worked satisfactorily in the election to the Sembiam Panchayat where it was first tried.

(*c*) Yes. The Government have also under consideration a more simplified system of voting, by allotting a colour to each candidate which will be printed against his name in the ballot paper so that even illiterate voters may make their choice without the assistance of the polling officer.

Mr. M. A. Manikkavelu Nayakar:—"May I take it, Sir, that it is the intention of the Government to introduce the colour system of voting at the local board elections next year?"

The Hon. the Raja of Bobbili:—"As an experimental measure we have tried it in the panchayat elections. We shall see how far it would be successful. In the case of the district boards, there is already the ballot system which does not involve much difficulty."

Mr. M. A. Manikkavelu Nayakar:—"In the answer to clause (*b*) it is stated that the system worked satisfactorily in the case of one panchayat. May I know what the difficulty is of the Government in extending it to the local boards elections which are to come off next year?"

The Hon. the Raja of Bobbili:—"First of all we wanted to try the experiment in the case of the panchayats and see how far it was successful. If it is successful, it will be extended to other bodies."

Dr. P. Subbarayan:—"May I ask the Hon. the Chief Minister what would be the difficulty in introducing this system to elections to municipal councils and district boards also, if really the system has been found satisfactory and the secrecy of the ballot can be maintained by this method?"

27th February 1934]

The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"There is absolutely no difficulty, Sir. We thought it might be unnecessary in the case of the district boards and municipalities where the proportion of illiterate voters is very low."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"Is the Hon. Minister aware that even literate people are sometimes compelled to declare themselves illiterate for purposes of voting?"

The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"I do not know; if it is so, it is a matter in the discretion of the election officer."

Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN:—"Is the Hon. the Chief Minister so certain that the number of illiterate voters in the case of the district boards and municipalities is numerically smaller than the number of literate voters?"

The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"I think the proportion is lower, Sir."

Mr. P. PEDDI RAJU:—"Am I to understand, Sir, that, when illiteracy is so rampant in the unions, the same thing is not the case in the case of the taluk and district boards?"

The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"I have already answered that my opinion is that the proportion of illiterate voters for the district boards and municipalities is less."

Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN:—"May I point out, with your permission, Sir, to the Hon. Gentleman, the Chief Minister, that my point is that the number of illiterate voters in the case of both the district boards and municipalities is certainly larger in proportion than literate voters, and therefore if the secrecy of the ballot box is to be maintained, is it not better, especially as in the case of the panchayats this method was found satisfactory, to introduce this method of voting by colour in the case of the district boards and municipalities?"

The Hon.the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"I have never stated that Government have any objection to introduce this method. What I stated is, in order to satisfy ourselves that the system was satisfactory, we wished to give a trial in the case of the panchayats first and then, if it was found satisfactory, to introduce it in the case of the other elections."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"May I point out, Sir, that the conditions in the district boards and in the panchayats may conceivably differ one from the other; if so, will it not be better that this experiment is tried simultaneously in all kinds of local bodies, so that we may have full data for coming to a final decision?"

The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"I shall consider the suggestion, Sir."

Mr. M. A. MANIKKAVELU NAYAKAR:—"Is not the Government satisfied with the experiment so far made?"

[27th February 1934

The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—" The experiment has been made only on a limited scale, and Government felt that it was necessary to give a more extended trial."

Mr. ABDUL HAMEED KHAN:—" May I know if experiments are not always made on a limited scale?"

The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—" The point is that we feel that sufficient experience has not been gained for giving a definite opinion in the matter."

Mr. V. T. ARASU:—" May I know from the Hon. Minister whether the experiment tried at Sembiem has been a success or a failure?"

The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—" If the hon. Member had been here a little earlier, he would have seen the answer to his question in the printed answer itself."

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Irrigation

Resumption of Tank Restoration Scheme operations in Tinnevelly and elsewhere.

713 *Q.*—Mr. DANIEL THOMAS: Will the Hon. the Member for Revenue be pleased to state with regard to the Tank Restoration Scheme work in the Tinnevelly district—

(*a*) the total number of irrigation works and the total extent of the ayacut within the scope of the Tank Restoration Scheme operations;

(*b*) the total number of irrigation works along with the total extent and annual revenue of their ayacut which have yet to be entered upon for investigation;

(*c*) what progress, if any, has been made in regard to the sanction and execution of the Tank Restoration Scheme proposals regarding 26 irrigation works that are mentioned in a memorial to the Government, dated 6th April 1933, by the Tinnevelly District Association, which have been held up on account of the suspension of the Tank Restoration Scheme; and

(*d*) whether a number of representations has been made to the Government, that the Tank Restoration Scheme work may be resumed in Tinnevelly and other similar districts in view of the proportionately large extents of area still to be investigated in those districts and whether the Government propose to consider their cases favourably?

A.—(*a*) & (*b*) A statement giving the figures (except in regard to the annual revenue regarding which Government have no information), as they stood on 30th September 1932, was laid on the table in answer to question No. 477, dated 24th January 1933. Later figures are not available with Government.